

Press Clippings 7/13/2018

---Courier News--- 7/13/18

Elgin-area school districts still looking for bus drivers but don't expect start-of-school problems

BY RAFAEL GUERRERO



School districts U46 and 303 are still seeking to hire more bus drivers but officials say they are not worried there will be any problems when school resumes next month. (Michael Conroy / AP)

School districts U46 and 303 are on the hunt to hire more bus drivers as the new school year draws near.

The districts have posted job openings, advertised in their communities and conducted job fairs this summer in an effort to recruit potential hires, officials said.

U46 still needs an estimated 25 new drivers, district spokeswoman Mary Fergus said. The district employs more than 300 people to operate more than 280 bus routes, according to its transportation department.

The district always aims to have at least 10 percent more drivers than routes in order to cover for employee absences, Fergus said. Plus, there's been an increase in retirements of employees with extensive experience, including one this spring of a driver who worked for the district for 41 years, she said.

"The transportation department will be ready to transport all students on the first day of school, Wednesday, Aug. 15," Fergus said. "Ongoing interviews will continue in order to prepare for the upcoming retirees."

The starting wages for a U46 school bus driver is \$18.48 an hour, followed by annual cost-of-living increases, according to the drivers' most recent contract. Drivers may also qualify for benefits, pension and retirement programs, and generally work between four to six hours a day.

Neighboring St. Charles School District 303 hopes to hire eight or nine more drivers ahead of this fall, district spokeswoman Carol Smith said. It currently employs 120 drivers, and the search for more employees will not affect transportation operations in the fall, she said.

“We are very fortunate that we seem to get it done,” Smith said in light of the shortage of bus drivers many districts face.

Just like U46, some of District 303’s driver vacancies are the result of a large number of retirements that occurred at the end of the school year, she said.

The St. Charles district pays their starting drivers about \$19 an hour for four to six hours of work a day.

Drivers hired by District 303 have their commercial drivers’ license classes paid for by the district, Smith said. Drivers that average at least six hours of work a day in a 182-day school year earn medical benefits and may qualify for pensions once hired and remain employed, she said.

School District 300 is currently well supplied to meet its needs, transportation officials said. The Algonquin-based district has 190 drivers for its 174 bus routes. Unlike U46 and District 303, D300 outsources its transportation needs to private provider, Durham School Services.

Kate Walden, a communications specialist for Durham, said the company conducted a job fair last month for prospective bus drivers and hire on a year-round basis. Sixteen candidates applied at the June fair, and they currently have more than 30 driver candidates undergoing screening or training, Walden said.

Durham pays entry-level drivers at \$17.50 an hour.

“Becoming a Durham driver is a rigorous process,” Walden said. “Prior to employment, all applicants must pass pre-screening checks that include criminal background, motor vehicle record review, DOT pre-employment drug screening and a DOT medical examination, all by third parties.”

A survey conducted last summer by trade publication School Bus Fleet reported that more than half of responding bus driver contractors said they were experiencing a “moderate” shortage of drivers. Nearly 25 percent described their shortage as “severe.”

---Daily Herald--- 7/13/18

Gail Borden Library offers help for students, history programs

SUBMITTED BY GAIL BORDEN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Gail Borden Public Library will host online registration assistance for Elgin Area School District U-46 returning students from 1 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, July 18, at the main library computer center, 270 N. Grove Ave. in Elgin.

Library and U-46 staff members will be onsite to provide assistance for completing registration for the 2018-19 school year.

Families are asked to bring the yellow registration form containing username and password and proof of current residency.

This event is for parents with children returning to U-46 who have not completed registration.

If you are new to the district, please call to set up an appointment at our district office, (847) 888-5000, ext. 5717 (5016 for Spanish).

Reading off your fines:

Kids and teens can read off overdue fines on their Gail Borden Library Card through Aug. 31. Every hour of reading will waive \$5 of fines. There is no limit to the amount of fines that can be waived and the reading can be done at home! Pick up a form at the main library, 270 N. Grove Ave., the Rakow Branch, 2751 W. Bowes Road, or the South Elgin Branch, 127 S. McLean Blvd. in South Elgin. For information, go to www.gailborden.info/fines.

Treasure trove of history:

The Elgin Genealogical Society's summer program schedule includes some intriguing subjects worth investigating.

Cluster Research Karen Pickelsimer will show you how to prove the identity of your ancestors using the "FAN Principle (Family, Associates and Neighbors)" at 7 p.m. Thursday, July 19.

In "What's New in British Isles," researcher Paul Milner, a professional genealogist specializing in British Isles research, will discuss new primary and secondary sources including original records, new indexes, books, CD-ROMs and websites at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, Aug. 7.

In "Local Histories Add Clues to Your Genealogy," presenter Kimberly Nagy, MD, PLCGS, will talk about how local histories can be helpful by providing clues for future research at 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 16.

Visit www.gailborden.info.

---Courier News--- 7/13/18

Part-time school resource officer job at West Dundee middle school to go full time

BY RAFAEL GUERRERO

Tyra Becker, of Elgin, whose story made national news in early June when the city of Elgin told her to [remove oversized "Impeach Trump" signs](#) from her yard, has died. She was 94.

The signs were quickly replaced with signs containing the same sentiment — but sized in accordance with city signage rules — and the Elgin woman continued her activist lifestyle until days before her death, according to friends and family.

According to Julia McClendon, director of the Elgin Area YWCA on whose board Becker served, Becker attended the June 30 Families Belong Together rally protesting the separation of immigrant families by the U.S. government, despite the heat

On June 27, she attended the Elgin City Council meeting at which new U.S. citizens were recognized.

On June 22, Becker joined other activists to meet with U.S. Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi's staff in Elgin about immigration issues.

Her daughter, Tracy Dillinger, said she had visited her mom a week ago for the Fourth of July holiday. Becker “had a rapid deterioration” after that, she said.

Becker died peacefully in her sleep Tuesday night, Dillinger said.



Lifelong voter and activist Myra Becker, 94, discusses her Impeach Trump sign on June 6, 2018 in Elgin. (Stacey Wescott / Chicago Tribune)

An Iowa native, Becker and her husband, Morton “Mort” Becker, came to Elgin in 1965. While he worked as a **psychologist for Elgin-based School District U46**, she was a speech therapist in area schools. The couple raised three children.

Morton Becker died in 1993.

Myra Becker retired from Community Unit District 300 in 1985, and had been involved with the League of Women Voters since 1958. Since 1981, Becker also donated much of her time to the YWCA Elgin board, serving for a time as board president, and was instrumental in pushing for its child care and Teen Reach programs, McClendon said.

She played a significant role in various area organizations advocating for issues such as women’s empowerment, mental health, voter’s rights, fair housing legislation and education.

In addition to the YWCA Elgin, Becker was a member of the Elgin Area League of Women Voters and served on the Larkin Center’s board of directors before that organization closed.

Becker had a master's degree in speech therapy, which she earned right after WWII, "a time when most women were going for an MRS degree," Dillinger said.

Her mother didn't want to make trouble in the neighborhood or the community, Dillinger said.

"She didn't want to be high profile in that way. But she through eternity will be concerned about our democratic society and the American government. That bothered her, that the direction it has gone is wrong both morally and ethically," Dillinger said.

A funeral service is set for 2 p.m. Friday at the Beth Tikvah Congregation Synagog in Hoffman Estates.

---Courier News--- 7/13/18

Part-time school resource officer job at West Dundee middle school to go full time

BY RAFAEL GUERRERO

The part-time school resource officer at School District 300's West Dundee middle school is to become a full-time job this fall.

The school district and West Dundee Police Department are to approve an intergovernmental agreement under which the resource officer position at Dundee Middle School, held by detective Kate McCarthy since 2011, will increase from 20 hours per week to 40. The officer will also respond to calls at Dundee Highlands Elementary School as necessary.

"In the type of environment we are living in, and all the recent events and (school) shootings, (D300 officials) want to make sure their schools are safe," West Dundee Police Chief Andrew Wieteska said. "And that school has a population of more than 1,000, it's a large school. It makes sense. I'm sure both (the D300 school board and Village of West Dundee trustees) will approve it."

D300 will reimburse the village 66 percent of the total cost, which includes salary, benefits, pension, insurance and other expenses, Wieteska said. The cost to be somewhere between \$120,000 and \$130,000 annually, he said.

Last school year, West Dundee and D300 split the cost of McCarthy's salary, about \$84,000, according to the 2017-18 agreement.

Besides policing, the school resource officer will present educational programs, provide training to faculty and staff, and act as a police liaison between students, families, faculty and staff.

School resource officers are in place at most of the D300 middle schools. Carpentersville, Hampshire and West Dundee have agreements in place with D300, and the school board is to vote on expanding school resource officer program into Algonquin Middle School and Westfield Community School in Algonquin.

Nearby, **Elgin-based School District U46** has school resource officers in place at all eight of its middle schools. Districts locally and beyond have adopted or expanded such programs to put more focus on school safety and security, especially as mass school shootings became more frequent.

Village of West Dundee trustees will vote on the intergovernmental agreement at its next board meeting after the school board approves it this week, Wieteska said.

---Courier News--- 7/13/18

Ward's fan

SPEAK OUT

Let's hear it again for Ms. (Jeanette) Ward. She is the only (School District) U46 board member who has any brains. Stick with it and stick with her. She is the best person the school district has ever had. God bless, Ms. Ward.

A message to U46's Ward:

SPEAK OUT

I have a word to say about U46 school board member Jeanette Ward, who is being ridiculed for her conservative stances. Thousands of us stand by you, Jeanette. Keep the faith and don't stop giving your opinion. The world is upside down right now, but it won't always be.

Editor's note

Speak Out is a reader-generated column of opinions. If you see something you disagree with or think is incorrect, call us at 312-222-2460 or email couriernews@tribpub.com. Please include "speak out" in the subject line.

Press Clippings 7/14/2018

NOTE: There were no U-46 related news stories in the July 14, 2018 newspapers.

Press Clippings 7/15/2018

SPORTS

---Courier News--- 7/15/18

‘It was really surreal at first’

Defensive coordinator Gonzalez hired by Larkin to be head coach

BY PAUL JOHNSON



Former Larkin defensive coordinator Jesus Gonzalez was named the Royals' new varsity football coach on Wednesday. (Photo provided by Larkin athletics)

Jesus Gonzalez called the moment “surreal.” But he’s ready to be **Larkin’s** head football coach after serving as defensive coordinator.

After Dragan Teonic left Larkin last month for South Elgin, Royals athletic director Ethan Karolczak had to piece together a list in short order. He received 20 resumes and interviewed nine candidates.

It turned out the right man was already leading the Royals’ summer workouts. Larkin announced the hiring on Wednesday of Gonzalez to his first varsity head coaching job.

“It was really surreal at first,” Gonzalez said. “I’m just really excited to have this opportunity. I’m really happy that Ethan and (principal Jamie Crosen) are giving me this chance.

“I thought that I did have a good chance because I’ve been in the program the past five years. I was working with Dragan and he was my mentor. He really prepped me the last couple years.”

Karolczak was quick to point out Gonzalez wasn’t hired solely because he was already in the program and running the summer workouts since Teonic’s departure.

“We went through the whole process and were focused on the process and he fits the bill,” Karolczak said. “He’s the guy. On a compressed timeline we went through as exhausting a process as we could.

“At the end of the day, he’s the guy. He absolutely has the core values that our program believes in.”

Gonzalez was a three-sport star at Aurora Central Catholic, where he graduated in 2007. He participated in football, wrestling and track. He attended Waubonsee Community College and Aurora University, where he graduated in 2012.

He began coaching at Plano for a year before landing at Larkin. He's the Royals' varsity assistant in wrestling and the throws coach in track.

"He's the hardest working guy in the building," Karolczak said of Gonzalez. "Our kids will run through walls for him. We're really excited to have him. He's the perfect guy to lead our football program.

"He's a lifelong learner. He's a hard worker. He's loyal. That's what we want our kids to be."

Karolczak introduced Gonzalez as the new coach to the team on Wednesday.

"They were ecstatic," Gonzalez said. "They're ready to roll. I think it's a smooth transition for the kids. I've been with the seniors the whole time. It gives them familiarity with the coaching staff."

The Royals have been on the brink of their first playoff appearance since 2006. Larkin went 4-5 in each of the two last seasons.

Gonzalez sees a group that's ready to get over that hurdle this fall in the revamped Upstate Eight Conference.

"This is a really special group," Gonzalez said. "We've been knocking on the door. I think this group has a chance to get us past that.

"We have to take care of our business. We have to get out there and take care of what we need to take care of and do our thing the way we're supposed to."

Press Clippings 7/16/2018

NOTE: There were no U-46 related news stories in the July 16, 2018 newspapers.